



**STATE OF CONNECTICUT**  
*DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES*  
*A Healthcare Service Agency*

Dannel P. Malloy  
Governor

Patricia A. Rehmer, MSN  
Commissioner

## **Memorandum:**

TO: Public Health Committee

FROM: Commissioner Patricia Rehmer, MSN, DMHAS

DATE: March 4, 2015

SUBJECT: Written Testimony on House Bill 5058

Good Afternoon Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter, and distinguished members of the Public Health Committee. I am Commissioner Patricia Rehmer of the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS), and I am writing today to address proposed H.B. No. 5058 AN ACT CONCERNING SUBSTANCE ABUSE TREATMENT.

There are many substance use residential and outpatient programs that serve individuals that are not actively using drugs or alcohol. These programs understand that addiction is an insidious disease in which there can be both physical and psychological dependence. There are many stories of people who have not used substances, sometimes for many years, and then relapse unexpectedly. Likewise, we know of people who have been incarcerated, and may appear to have resolved their substance use because they are not currently using, only to then relapse as soon as they are released. In other words, just because the person hasn't used a substance recently doesn't mean that they are in recovery.

The particular concern prompting this bill, we believe, is when an individual shows up at a detoxification center requesting services, but hasn't used drugs or alcohol recently enough for them to be either obviously intoxicated or for the amount of substance measured in their system to be over a certain threshold.. Admission for substance use treatment, including detoxification, should be based on an interview with the potential client that includes their history of substance use and its consequences, and also includes physical findings, as is required at Connecticut Valley Hospital Addiction Services and Blue Hills Hospital Addiction Services which are DMHAS operated detox facilities. It should not rely solely on current physical measures or intoxication.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter